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4 March 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Research)

SUBJECT : Meeting to Consider Further Action under
NSAM 192

1. In the absence of the DD/R, the undersigned attended a meeting in the office of the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs on March 1 for discussions relating to further action under National Security Action Memo 192 (Contingency Plan for U. S. Reaction to Soviet Placing of a Nuclear Weapon in Space).

2. The meeting was held pursuant to the attached memorandum from Under Secretary Johnson and for the purpose of reviewing the draft reports appended thereto.

3. In essence, the committee approved the recommendation on page 7 of the Contingency Plan which endorses the fourth course of action set forth therein. The recommendation reads as follows:

"The United States should initiate now actions anticipating the fourth course of action. In anticipation of the contingency of a Soviet weapon in space, we should take appropriate occasions now to emphasize the military insignificance, irresponsibility, and propagandistic purposes of such a possible Soviet action. We should, however, also continue to prepare as rapidly as possible stand-by anti-satellite capabilities for use in case the particular initial circumstances, or the need to modify and extend the fourth course, should lead to decision to interdict Soviet space weapons."

4. In addition to the actions listed in the recommendation, the committee agreed that the Under Secretary of Defense, Mr. Nitze, would undertake exploration of one possible additional course of action to determine its feasibility from a technical and economic standpoint; i. e., the development of a comparable

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capability by the U. S. to put a nuclear weapon into orbit as a countermeasure, specifically for psychological and propaganda purposes. The Defense representatives advised that such a program would be extremely costly from the standpoint of developing a command and control system which would be viable for an extended period; e. g., four months. The CIA representative suggested that possibly a constant control and stabilization system such as is required for reconnaissance satellites might not be essential for this type of system; that a free orbit (unstabilized) might be employed with control and stabilization activated only at such time as the weapon was actually to be fired. DOD agreed that this approach might be feasible and considerably less costly and would consider it in their review of the problem.

5. In these discussions, the question of a declaratory ban (without inspection) was not met head-on, although the White House representative, Mr. Kaysen, expressed the opinion that we should endeavor to get such agreement. The CIA representative requested the present status of confidential discussions with the Russians on this subject and was advised that the Soviets had displayed little or no interest. The CIA representative requested that before implementation of any proposal to introduce a resolution publicly (e. g., in the U. N.) for such a declaratory ban (which could well elicit counterproposals for the banning of all military activity in space) that the Committee members be given an opportunity to review with their respective principals the desirability of such a course of action. There was disagreement within the Committee as to whether the President's direction of last summer to seek such a declaratory ban was limited to confidential discussions or included a public approach; however, it was finally concluded that it was so limited and further approval would be required if an open approach were to be made. In this context it was agreed that the Committee members would be given an opportunity to re-examine their agency positions before any action was taken.

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